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ABSTRACT

Most developing countries have been debt ridden since the mid-1970s. This continuing debt burden has resulted in increasing prices and inflation, growing unemployment, and daily life difficulties. This problem has been acute for the Sudan. Sudan received help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1978 and negotiated new credit terms. By 1981, however, Sudan had defaulted on the agreement and its deficit had risen to about $1.3 billion and to $7 billion by 1982. The result of the IMF/World Bank management of the Sudan economy was deepening economic crisis precipitating declining social welfare. Various policies need to be put into place in order to improve the situation. Policies include the following: proper planning for training that is linked to the use of appropriate technology; use of training structures to their maximum capacities; and spreading of vocational training centers in all states. The following are specifically recommended: (1) training activities in the industrial, agricultural, youth, transportation, and energy and mining sectors; (2) women's training; (3) training for persons with disabilities and street children; (4) training of trainers; (5) the structure of the vocational training administration; (6) finance; (7) training at the state level; and (8) small-scale industries. Since human resource development is crucial for socioeconomic advancement of the country, more efforts are needed to increase awareness of people to the importance of having skilled personnel in the Sudan to ensure the success of national development plans. (KC)

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OVERCOMING STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT POLICIES IN AFRICA: STRATEGIES FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE SUDAN

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INTRODUCTION:

Most Third World countries have been debt ridden since the mid 70s. Today, twenty years later, the debt has cumulated to an out-of-proportion amount. This has resulted in increasing prices and inflation, growing unemployment, and daily life difficulties. During the last two decades, economic and financial developments in sub-Saharan Africa are divided into three phases. During the first phase, from 1973 - 1979, African countries generally witnessed a major improvement in terms of trade, resulting in an expansion of both current and capital governmental expenditures and resorting to heavy domestic bank and external borrowing.

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The emerging financial constraints began manifesting themselves in accumulation of public sector domestic and external debt arrears. Simultaneously, monetary policy accommodated an expansion of private sector credit, while the regulated low interests discouraged savings and contributed to a misallocation of resources. The African countries established large but inefficient public enterprises; expanded the scope of price controls and subsidies, and with increasingly overvalued exchange rates, intensified exchange and trade restrictions that led to the emergence of a widespread paralleled market for goods and foreign exchange. By the end of the 1970s, the Sub-Saharan African countries were facing a major economic and financial crisis.

During the second phase, from 1980 - 1984, many African countries tried to cope with the crisis in the face of a deteriorating external environment. Oil price increased in 1979-1980 and a recession in the industrial countries contributed to a decline in trade with Sub-Saharan countries. In addition, the rise in the international; interest rates in the early 1980s worsened their debt service burden. Furthermore, the worst drought in 15 years hit large parts of Sub-Saharan African countries during 1982 - 1984.

The third phase, from 1985 - 1992 was characterized by a deepening of the structural adjustment efforts on part of number of African countries in the face

CE 065 235

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of a severely depressed international economic environment. During this period Sub-Saharan African countries witnessed one of the most severe shocks to its terms of trade that fell by some 40% due to considerably slow growth in industrial countries during 1990 - 1992. Civil unrest created serious economic disruptions, and drought affected immensely agricultural output and exports, thus, not withstanding the adjustment efforts.

The Sudanese Debt Problem:

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the mounting economic difficulties that the economies of Third World countries had been experiencing over the preceding decade became known as the 'debt crisis.'

The Sudanese debt problem started at about the same time as the Third World debt crisis as a result of continuing economic difficulties in other countries as well as itself. Richard Brown (1990) who has done extensive research on the problem of the Sudanese Debt Crisis, gives a brief background on the problem and how it came to get out of hand.

As being in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa, Sudan was not spared from debt-crisis that led to the intervention of the IMF to assist in planning debt services payments. In 1978, the IMF responded to Sudan's request for assistance in dealing with its growing balance of payment's problem where the deficit stood at approximately US $ 494 million. In that year, the first credit tranche was granted by the IMF, the Sudanese Pound was devalued by 14% and the government undertook to introduce tighter monitory and fiscal policies as well as a revision of product relations and pricing policies in the Gezira, to stimulate the production of Sudan's main export Crop, cotton. This mid 1978 first credit represents the first stage of Sudan's third IMF supported stabilization program since independence.

In the following year, 1979, the IMF approved a request by the Sudanese authorities for three years Extended Fund Facility. However, in the face of further deteriorating of the deficit and payment arrears, the Sudanese authorities engaged in a new round of negotiations with the IMF. Having satisfied the Executive Board with their compliance with the performance criteria, the new request was duly granted.

Within less than a year, however, it had become clear that the government had failed to meet its delegations under the agreement and the credit allocation for the financial year 1981 - 1982 was suspended. Before the year ended, Sudan balance of payments was again in a critical position. The deficit had risen to almost US $ 1.3 billion. By the end of 1982 the officials estimated the Sudan's external debt was revised to about US $ 7 billion.

Not unlike other stabilization programs, the primary focus of the prescribed policies in the Sudanese case was:

a) Devaluation, liberalization and Unification of the exchange regime.
b) Bank credit restrictions, interest rate increases and curtailment of money supply growth.
c) Reduction of governments budgetary deficit through expenditure cuts and tax increase (Brown, 1990).

Structural Adjustment Policies for Sudan:

Ali (1990) studied the situation of the Sudan and how the World Bank and the IMF through their Structural Adjustment Packages were able to create economic and human crises in the Sudan.

a) Over the period 1978 - 1985 (April) the Sudan economy was managed for all intents and purposes by the IMF in collaboration with the World Bank, the two institutions experimenting with almost all kinds of structural adjustment measures.

b) The end, result of the IMF - World Bank management of the Sudan economy was deepening economic crises which in turn precipitated declining social welfare and increased human misery.
c) Following a wide ranging public debate on the state of the state of the economy a consensus has emerged that the so-called structural adjustment programs are irrelevant to the Sudan. The alternative approach is to be found in a deliberate inward looking strategy that has to start by putting the institutional house in order first (Ali, 1990).

Evidently, in the Sudan the policies put forth by the World Bank and the IMF did not react with the economy as was theorized. This is turn created a worsening situation of the economy and the peoples difficulties multiplied. The direct result of which were many, of which one was migration that resulted in the increase of women's load in the home and family.

Not many studies have aimed to look at the interaction of the structural adjustment policies with the human resources, specially those who can fully contribute to the national development of their country.

Strategies For Vocational Education and Training in the Sudan.

Human resources development is crucial for any developing country for its economic growth, structure and hence, its national development.

In the Sudan, the National Comprehensive Strategy NCS (1990-2002) has stressed the need for preparing skilled laborers who are committed to the welfare and development of their country. To achieve this goal the following policy recommendations must be considered:

1. Proper planning for training that is linked to the use of appropriate technology.
2. Utilization of training structures to their maximum capacities.
3. Spreading of vocational training centers in all states.

The followings are recommended strategies for the different vocational training sectors:

First: In regard to training needs:

1. **Industrial sector**

A. Sugar Industry:

1. Evaluation of existing training programs to assess training needs.
2. Concentration on on-job training and follow up in order to determine training needs.
3. Increase the number of training staff and provide training of trainers.
4. Support of additional training facilities at the sites of sugar industry to work in collaboration with the National Training Centers.

B. Other industrial sectors:

1. Prioritize industrial training needs to include training in leather work, textiles, food processing, small scale industries and printing and determine training gaps.
2. Link training institutions with industrial sectors to fulfill the needs of each sector.
3. Construction of training facilities in each industrial complex.
4. Exchange of training opportunities between industrial sectors.
5. Involvement of trade union, trade industrial houses in the management of government training centers as well as oblige them to establish training facilities at different industrial complexes.

6. Formulation of quality control centers for small scale industries.
7. Establishment of small industrial business at the least developed areas.

II. Agricultural Sector:

To maximize production, training is needed as follows:

1. Provide technical training according to development needs and ensure geographical distribution of trained cadre.
2. Monitoring and evaluation of agricultural institutions training programs and provide technical support to enable these institutions to cope with the agricultureal revolution in the country.
3. Focusing the training on how to operate agricultural equipment's.
4. Revision and development of training curriculum.
5. Increase training capacity to fill the gap in different agricultural sectors.
6. Development of small agricultural equipment industry.

III. Youth Sector:

Youths in this sector are those who do not have the opportunity to complete their formal academic education:

1. To avoid engagement of youth in marginal jobs, they must be trained as skilled laborers.
2. Involve girls and young women in training activities that will help them to generate income for their families.
3. Provide job opportunity for as many youth as possible to attract them for training.
4. Link training with education programs that are geared towards serving social needs of those youth.
5. Establishment of training of trainers center.
6. Provide training opportunities for those who are enrolled in non formal religions schools.
7. Establishment of a supervisory national council to coordinate training programs for different training institutions

IV. Transportation Sector:

To maximize the benefits from the training centers that are belonging to the transportation sectors, the followings are recommended:

1. Evaluation of quality and quantity of training programs administered.
2. Rehabilitation of training centers to cope with new technology.
3. Attract foreign technical assistance to rehabilitate training centers.

4. Coordinate training efforts between centers to maximize the benefits from trainers and training facilities.
5. Link training with development programs.
6. Promote training of trainers in and outside the country.
7. Promote and support research and curriculum development at training locations.

V. Energy and mining sector:

1. Establishment of special training units for different aspects of oil industry.
2. Support short training courses abroad till establishing local training centers.
3. Oblige mining companies to lunch technical training for their employees.
4. Support the training cadre working at the National Electricity Corporation training center.
5. Develop existing training centers to accommodate training needs of workers in the energy sector.

Secondly: In regard to women's training:

1. Determine the goals for training women in certain areas.
2. Successive training for women who do not have an opportunity to get training.
3. Provision of special vocational training for illiterate women.
4. Link academic with vocational training to make it more appealing to women.
5. Introduction of new training activities that are geared towards, improving women's capacity income generating activities.
6. Orient training curricula to suit the need of women in different localities.

Third: In regard to individuals with special needs such as the handicapped and street children:

1. In coordination with NGOs helping handicaps, plan a national working plan to train them according to their needs.
2. Make use of media devices to raise the awareness of people to the importanceof integrating individuals with special needs into various community activities..
3. Provision of transportation means to handicapped to aid them in pursuing their training and hence, increase their production.
4. Provide training of trainers.
5. Facilitate enrollment of individuals with special needs in the different technical schools and vocational training centers.
6. Provision of job opportunities for trained handicapped.
7. Provision vocational training via religious schools for street children.

Fourth: In regard to trainers:

1. Establishment of the National training of trainers center.
2. Developing of a unified curriculum for training that is geared towards human resource development hence, the national development.
3. Improve working conditions and contract for trainers.

Fifth: In regard to organization's structure of the vocational training administration:

1. Reformation of the Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Act of 1974 to ensure that country train enough skilled workers to meet present and future industrial requirements.
2. Review training legislation when considered necessary.
3. Reformation of the National Council for Apprenticeship and Vocational training and define its activities to include policy formulation and communication of those policies with different institutions to maximize utilization of various training centers.

Six: In regard to finance:

1. Establishment of a financing body composed of banks and private companie that provide funding for different training programs.
2. Marketing of training centers production.
3. Provide paid training opportunities for private sector.
4. Marketing of training experience to industrial companies.
5. Stimulate funds from Sudanese who live abroad.
6. Apply small taxation on some export commodities such as cotton.

Seven: In regard to training at the state level:

1. Formulation of a training council in each state to be in charge of designing and implementing training programs according to the state needs.
2. Establishment of a national coordinated body to supervise all states training activities.
3. Support training activities in the southern states.

Eight: In regard to small scale industries:

1. Provision of enough funds.
2. Government and political support for small scale industry.

3. Insurance of investment opportunities for small scale industries.
4. Reduction of taxes and customs applied towards small scale industries.
5. Establishment of special unit to coordinate small scale industry activities.
6. Coordinate between funding institutions and beneficiaries in regard to provision of equipment and training facilities.
7. Provision of training for women as household producers.

CONCLUSIONS:

From what it was mentioned above, it is evident that human resource development is crucial for socio-economic advancement of the country. The welfare of the mankind cannot be attained without the participation of trained human resources. In the Sudan, the public effort in the area of vocational training falls far short of the requirements of the development. It is important that more efforts needed to increase the awareness of people to the importance of having skilled manpower in the Sudan to ensure sustain ability of national development plans.

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